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TOPONYMIC DATA FILES: AUTOMATED DATA-PROCESSING (ADP) SYSTEMS

A syllabus for ADP technology and toponymic application

Paper submitted by the United States of America**

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1. Spatial science is an attempt to identify, analyse and classify the environment and its components. An essential, but often overlooked aspect of spatial science is what is referred to as toponymy or the study of geographic names. The phenomenon of naming is man's attempt to provide spatial points of reference in an otherwise culturally undefined geographical area. Until recently, the collection and analysis of names has been accomplished through labour-intensive manual processing, thereby prohibiting complete analysis. With the advent of computer technology, the ability to store, process and analyse vast quantities of names and associated information has created new frontiers in toponymy. Advances in computer technology, especially with regard to stand-alone hardware and related software, have greatly reduced the cost and increased the arena of toponymic research and application.

2. This course of instruction will address the application of automated data processing to the science of toponymy with special emphasis on techniques of data input and data retrieval. It is expected that the student will obtain an overall understanding of ADP methodology as applied to toponymic research.

3. Coursework will include special training in data collection, office processing and data entry. Additional training will include techniques of data retrieval utilizing a Data Base Management System (DBMS) in a stand-alone computer environment. The course will include both classroom and workshop training.

I. Introduction

- A. Terminology
- B. Standardization
- C. Overview of hardware
- D. Overview of software
- E. Data Base Management Systems

II. Fieldwork (as applied to ADP)

- A. Data-collection requirements
- B. Data recording

III. Office processing

- A. Data verification
- B. Loading the data

IV. Data-retrieval requirements and techniques

- A. Three principal operations
- B. Standard or routine retrieval
- C. Specialized retrieval
- D. Formatting reports
- E. Products

V. Maintenance procedures

A. Field techniques
B. Other written sources
C. Office processing (backups)
D. Updating the database
E. User tracking
F. Security

VI. Summary

A. Questions
B. Evaluations of workshop material
C. Variations in toponymic application based upon cultural interpretation; discussion

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